

Remarks

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action mailed June 28, 2002. To advance this Application expeditiously to issuance, the following changes have been made:

- (a) Claims 1, 9, and 19 have been canceled.
- (b) Claims 6, 15, and 25 have been rewritten to explicitly recite limitations of Claims 1, 9, and 19 already contained in Claims 6, 15, and 25 by virtue of their dependency on Claims 1, 9, and 19, respectively. Accordingly, these amendments do not narrow these claims.
- (c) Claims 2-5 and 29-33 have been amended to depend on now independent Claim 6. Claims 10, 12-14, 18, and 34-38 have been amended to depend on now independent Claim 15. Claims 20, 22-24, 28, and 39-43 depend on now independent Claim 25.
- (d) Claim 44 has been amended to incorporate limitations similar to those found in Claims 6, 15, and 25.

None of these changes are considered necessary for patentability and should not be construed as acquiescence to or agreement with the Examiner's statements in the Office Action, particularly those concerning the disclosure or teaching of a reference or combination of references, the appropriateness of combining references, or the scope of or limitations recited in Applicant's claims.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and full allowance of all pending claims.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objects to Claims 2-8, 10-18, and 20-28 as depending on rejected Claims, 1, 9, and 19, respectively, but acknowledges that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has rewritten Claims 6, 15, and 25 in independent form. Applicant has also amended Claims 2-5 to depend on now independent Claim 6, amended Claims 10, 12-14, and 18 to depend on now independent Claim 15, and amended Claims 20, 22-24, and 28 to depend on now independent Claim 25. Applicant respectfully requests that the objections to the claims be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 9-11, 19-21, and 29-44 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,812,981 to Noguchi ("*Noguchi*") in view of U.S. Patent 6,324,581 to Xu ("*Xu*").

As discussed above, Applicant has canceled Claims 1, 9, and 19, has rewritten Claims 6, 15, and 25 (already acknowledged to be allowable) in independent form, and has amended Claims 10 and 20 to depend on Claims 15 and 25, respectively. Claims 11 and 21 depend on Claims 10 and 20, respectively. Applicant has also amended Claims 29-33 to depend on now independent Claim 6, amended Claims 34-38 to depend on now independent Claim 15, and amended Claims 39-43 to depend on now independent Claim 25. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of the claims be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and full allowance of all pending claims.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the Examiner is invited to contact Christopher W. Kennerly, Attorney for Applicant, at the Examiner's convenience at (214) 953-6812.

Although Applicant believes no fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark-Ups Reflecting Changes to Claims

1. (Canceled)
2. (Amended) The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein the first version of the business application comprises a version identification module operable to generate a version identification request for communication to the second client, the version identification request being associated with the business process and generated according to a version identification protocol supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, a version identification module of the second version of the business application initiating communication of the second version identifier to the first version of the business application in response to the version identification request.
3. (Amended) The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein the first version of the business application is operable, if the first version of the business application is an initiator of the business process, to control the business process if the second version is not higher than the first version.
4. (Amended) The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein the first version of the business application further comprises a business process module operable to:
 - generate a first business message associated with the business process for communication to the second client, the first business message being generated according to the second version; and
 - initiate retrieval from the second client of a second business message generated according to the second version.
5. (Amended) The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein the first client is operable to receive a status message from the second client indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process at the second client, the status message being generated according to a status message protocol supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application.

6. (Amended) A system for performing a business process, comprising:
a first version of a business application identified using a first version identifier
and executable by a first client to perform a business process, the first client being
coupled to a second client using a communication link, a second version of the business
application identified using a second version identifier being executable by the second
client to perform the business process;

the first version of the business application operable to determine the first version
identifier and the second version identifier and, if the first version is higher than the
second version, to exercise control over execution of the business process;

[The system of Claim 1, wherein] the first version of the business application [is]
operable to allow the second version of the business application to exercise control over
execution of the business process if the second version is higher than the first version.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Amended) The method of Claim [9] 15, further comprising:
generating a version identification request for communication from the first client to
the second client; and
receiving the second version identifier from the second client in response to the
version identification request.

12. (Amended) The method of Claim [9] 15, further comprising, if the first
version of the business application is an initiator of the business process, controlling the
business process at the first client if the second version is not higher than the first version.

13. (Amended) The method of Claim [9] 15, further comprising:
generating a first business message associated with the business process for
communication from the first client to the second client, the first business message being
generated according to the second version; and
retrieving from the second client a second business message generated by the second
client according to the second version.

14. (Amended) The method of Claim [9] 15, further comprising:

at the first client, receiving a status message generated by the second client according to a status message protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process at the second client; and

retrieving the business message from the second client in response to the status message.

15. (Amended) A method for performing a business process, comprising:

at a first client, determining a first version identifier associated with a first version of a business application used by the first client to perform a business process;

at the first client, determining a second version identifier associated with a second version of the business application used by a second client to perform the business process;

at the first client, exercising control over execution of the business process if the first version is higher than the second version; and

[The method of Claim 9, further comprising] at the first client, allowing the second version of the business application to exercise control over execution of the business process if the second version is higher than the first version.

18. (Amended) The method of Claim [9] 15, further comprising:

performing the business process according to the first version if the second version is higher than the first version; and

performing the business process according to the second version if the first version is higher than the second version.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Amended) The software of Claim [19] 25, further operable to:

generate a version identification request for communication from the first client to the second client; and

receive the second version identifier from the second client in response to the version identification request.

22. (Amended) The software of Claim [19] 25, further operable to, if the first version of the business application is an initiator of the business process, control the business process at the first client if the second version is not higher than the first version.

23. (Amended) The software of Claim [19] 25, further operable to:
generate a first business message associated with the business process for communication from the first client to the second client, the first business message being generated according to the second version; and
retrieve from the second client a second business message generated by the second client according to the second version.

24. (Amended) The software of Claim [19] 25, further operable to:
at the first client, receive a status message generated by the second client according to a status message protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process at the second client; and
retrieve the business message from the second client in response to the status message.

25. (Amended) Software for performing a business process, the software being encoded on a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:

at a first client, determine a first version identifier associated with a first version of a business application used by the first client to perform a business process;

at the first client, determine a second version identifier associated with a second version of the business application used by a second client to perform the business process;

at the first client, exercise control over execution of the business process if the first version is higher than the second version; and

[The software of Claim 19, further operable to] allow the second version of the business application to exercise control over execution of the business process if the second version is higher than the first version.

28. **(Amended)** The software of Claim [19] 25, further operable to:
perform the business process according to the first version if the second version is higher than the first version; and
perform the business process according to the second version if the first version is higher than the second version.

29. **(Amended)** The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein the first version is higher than the second version if the first version is one or more of:
more robust than the second version;
more advanced than the second version; and
capable of providing enhanced functionality or services, relative to the second version, in performing the business process.

30. **(Amended)** The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein the first version of the business application exhibits backward compatibility with the second version of the business application, the first version of the business application being capable of performing the business process according to either the first version or the second version.

31. **(Amended)** The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein the first business application of the first client can be upgraded from the first version to a higher version without negatively impacting any other clients in the system.

32. **(Amended)** The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein the first and second versions of the business application each exhibit bidirectional executability in that each can execute a business process that it did not itself initiate.

33. **(Amended)** The system of Claim [1] 6, wherein:
the first client is associated with a buyer enterprise;
the second client is associated with a seller enterprise;
the business process comprises an order purchasing business process;
the first business message comprises a purchase order; and
the second business message comprises a purchase order acknowledgement.

34. **(Amended)** The method of Claim [9] 15, wherein the first version is higher than the second version if the first version is one or more of:

- more robust than the second version;
- more advanced than the second version; and
- capable of providing enhanced functionality or services, relative to the second version, in performing the business process.

35. **(Amended)** The method of Claim [9] 15, wherein the first version of the business application exhibits backward compatibility with the second version of the business application, the first version of the business application being capable of performing the business process according to either the first version or the second version.

36. **(Amended)** The method of Claim [9] 15, wherein the first business application of the first client can be upgraded from the first version to a higher version without negatively impacting any other clients in the system.

37. **(Amended)** The method of Claim [9] 15, wherein the first and second versions of the business application each exhibit bidirectional executability in that each can execute a business process that it did not itself initiate.

38. **(Amended)** The method of Claim [9] 15, wherein:

- the first client is associated with a buyer enterprise;
- the second client is associated with a seller enterprise;
- the business process comprises an order purchasing business process;
- the first business message comprises a purchase order; and
- the second business message comprises a purchase order acknowledgement.

39. **(Amended)** The software of Claim [19] 25, wherein the first version is higher than the second version if the first version is one or more of:

- more robust than the second version;
- more advanced than the second version; and
- capable of providing enhanced functionality or services, relative to the second version, in performing the business process.

40. **(Amended)** The software of Claim [19] 25, wherein the first version of the business application exhibits backward compatibility with the second version of the business application, the first version of the business application being capable of performing the business process according to either the first version or the second version.

41. **(Amended)** The software of Claim [19] 25, wherein the first business application of the first client can be upgraded from the first version to a higher version without negatively impacting any other clients in the system.

42. **(Amended)** The software of Claim [19] 25, wherein the first and second versions of the business application each exhibit bidirectional executability in that each can execute a business process that it did not itself initiate.

43. **(Amended)** The software of Claim [19] 25, wherein:
the first client is associated with a buyer enterprise;
the second client is associated with a seller enterprise;
the business process comprises an order purchasing business process;
the first business message comprises a purchase order; and
the second business message comprises a purchase order acknowledgement.

44. **(Amended)** A system for performing a business process, comprising **means for:**

[means for,] at a first client, determining a first version identifier associated with a first version of a business application used by the first client to perform a business process;

[means for,] at the first client, determining a second version identifier associated with a second version of the business application used by a second client to perform the business process; **[and]**

[means for,] at the first client, if the first version is higher than the second version, exercising control over execution of the business process; **and**

at the first client, if the second version is higher than the first version, allow the second version of the business application to exercise control over execution of the business process .